

# THE GREATER THE SUCCESS THE BETTER YOU HAVE TO PERFORM

— Wishbone Ash

**A** WISHBONE, that V shaped bone (à la Harvey Smith), is a bone of luck. And on first appearance it may seem like luck that has brought Wishbone Ash thundering into the album charts with their second LP — "Pilgrimage."

But it was no luck — and for that matter no hype that brought them in the charts. They've worked hard to get where they are today and unlike many bands who get an album in the charts are not sitting back basking in their success. Rather they are concentrating hard on making sure they can consolidate their position, or even better it with good live appearances and their next album.

Just a few weeks back from a two month long tour of the States I went to see them in their house in West London. Not yet a trendy area — but a nice place just the same. The atmosphere is good — the records in the living room are not only Stackridge but also Beethoven and Bach.

A large wishbone is painted on the entrance to the kitchen. They are an amazingly domesticated lot — making cups of tea like it's going out of fashion — never having enough in the pot for six cups (they've got friends around — there are always friends around) always refilling the pot with more hot water.

We resume to the back bedroom to do an interview. A few laughs and a couple of pointed remarks — but it's all pretty harmless because I had come round to do an interview!

Ted Turner: "The American tour we've just finished was good in that it's starting to happen for us now. The first tour we did there was purely promotional — this time some of them had heard us before and they did things like calling out for special numbers which is nice."

"But two months is a long time to tour anywhere and we found we were getting a bit homesick in the last few weeks."

Both of Wishbone's albums have sold well in the States — their new one has already sold several thousand.

"We recorded Pilgrimage last June, or was it July? It took us a week altogether — it was a pity that we had to rush it. It was rushed simply because we wanted it to be released in America before we started the tour. In fact it came out two weeks after we arrived."

America, not unnaturally is a very important place for Wishbone to conquer.

"You can get across to so many people there. Audiences are of course variable because America is so huge geographically and the people are different in different areas. Down south where everything is easy going the audiences and the music is like this too."



WISHBONE ASH (l to r): MARTIN TURNER; STEVE UPTON (drums); ANDY POWELL and TED TURNER

"It's on the East Coast that the British bands are really big and where they like progressive music."

The group didn't cover the college circuit — that's what they are hoping to do on their next trip which may possibly be in March.

Obviously delighted their album has done so well in the charts I asked Steve Upton why he thought it had sold so well in this country.

## Performances

"It's a difficult thing to answer but I think it's because our first album left a taste of what the group was about. Also we did a lot of live performances around Britain and there has been a long time between this and the last album."

"By the time this album came

out people were wanting another album from us. It could, of course have worked in an opposite way if we had released an album too soon."

How do the group go about writing their material?

Steve: "No number is written and conceived by one person — it's always a collective thing. On the album, the track 'Lullabye' was mainly the responsibility of Ted and Andy but they may contribute less to other numbers. We gain a lot when we get to gigs and ideas come about. We don't tape them or anything — just keep them in our heads."

Andy Powell: "Although nothing has been written or put down for the next album about half of it

is written in our heads. We'd like to put it down on tape but up till now we've been short on money so we couldn't tape things."

Steve: "We had a lot of outlay — and any money we made we invested back into getting a good sound — and all that sort of thing costs money."

Andy: "For the last two years we've concentrated on getting the right sound on stage. The next thing we want to do is to buy some special stage lighting and to allocate a certain amount of money on getting tapes and decent recording facilities."

Their next album, the group insist will not be rushed — although they willingly agree in all likelihood it might be!

By  
Julie  
Webb

"We've put aside a couple of months for rehearsal," Steve told me. "Now time matters. People expect it — they are going to know if we're no good. When people hear a lot about a group, and now we are getting more publicity, then they have great expectations of you."

"The more publicity and the more well known you become, the better and more professional and disciplined you have to be."

Their music cannot be put into any special pre-packed "bag" but it has got its definite influences.

Steve: "I've always tended towards jazz, Andy towards folk and blues, Ted is a blues man and Martin (Turner) says he's biased towards classical music. But the great thing about the people in the group is that none of us think we are musically narrow minded."

"We like people to merit us on our music. We like to think we are original — but everyone likes to think that which is a load of bullshit. To the layman we'd be a rock band but frankly we don't like tags."

Do the group ever write material for anyone else?

"So far no — because it's the kind of material we used. Martin has written some stuff that would suit different artistes — the sort of thing that is not within our capacity to do."

They'd like to do session work but don't have the time — the band is the all important thing. But Ted did do some session work for a Mr Lennon and his current album, "Imagine."

You'd think he'd yell that from the rooftops when interviewed but I wouldn't have known about it if his publicist hadn't first informed me of that fact! Quiet lad, Ted!

Unlike most bands they actually like doing live gigs and enjoy the travelling involved.

"Every gig is unique in that every experience is new. The main thing that keeps us going is the progression."

And for the future — what do they wish?

"Just that we keep progressing and pleasing — that's all we want."